



31 March 2006

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

1. April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This observance is dedicated to raising awareness of sexual violence and promoting ways to prevent it.
2. Sexual assault and the attitudes that contribute to it have no place in our Army and will not be tolerated. This violent crime is incompatible with the Army Values, the Warrior Ethos, and our standards of discipline and professionalism. It also destroys morale and compromises unit combat readiness. Therefore, preventing sexual assault is everyone's responsibility and should be a top priority for commanders.
3. Sexual assault is the second most-reported felony in the Army in Europe. To help eliminate incidents of this crime, I want every commander and leader to educate Soldiers and civilians on ways to prevent sexual assault and how to help assault victims. Commanders must also create safe environments in which to live and work. As a minimum, commanders must—
 - Ensure that each Soldier and civilian receives scenario-based, small-group training each year on sexual assault prevention and response. This training should concentrate on sexual assault prevention, risk-factor awareness, appropriate dating behavior, how to avoid becoming an offender or a victim, the correlation between sexual assault and alcohol abuse, restricted and unrestricted reporting options and procedures, victim care and support services, and the consequences of committing this crime. Most of all, leaders must ensure that Soldiers adhere to the Army Values and understand that sexual assault is an expression of hostility and aggression (a behavioral act) and that the victims are not at fault.
 - Respond to all allegations of sexual assault expeditiously, verify that all incidents are investigated promptly and impartially, and ensure they are resolved quickly. Commanders are responsible for protecting and supporting victims. They must also take appropriate administrative or judicial actions based on the facts and circumstances of each case to hold offenders accountable. All leaders and Soldiers are responsible for reporting incidents of sexual assault to help victims and prevent offenders from assaulting someone else. They must also ensure that victims are aware of and have access to the numerous care and support services available in the Army in Europe. These include chaplains, installation and unit victim advocates, law enforcement officials, medical professionals, sexual assault response coordinators (SARCs), and deployable SARCs.
 - Take proactive measures to provide a safe and healthy environment for those in their charge. These measures include providing an overview of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program to newly assigned Soldiers within 24 hours after their arrival, implementing stringent barracks policy to lower the risk of assault, increasing leadership presence in the barracks, improving the lighting in the barracks and parking lots, and insisting that entry doors remain locked.


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- Develop a strategic plan that incorporates all aspects of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program. This plan should begin with procedures for prevention and advocacy, and end with actions for ensuring offenders are held accountable.

4. Each of us has a responsibility to eliminate sexual assault in the Army in Europe. We can do this by taking proactive measures and ensuring our Soldiers and civilians understand that *No means No!*



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